

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

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FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9816
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF, UNHCR, CG
SUBJECT: ANGOLAN REFUGEES IN BANDUNDU

REF: STATE 121982

1. MISSION HAS DISCUSSED FIGURES CONTAINED REFTEL WITH RESPONSIBLE UNHCR OFFICERS HERE WHO EXPRESSED SURPRISE OVER ELEVATED NUMBERS OF REFUGEES IN BANDUNDU. THEY CONFESSED, HOWEVER, THAT THEIR INFORMATION WAS "SCANT", POINTING OUT THAT THE UNHCR KINSHASA OFFICE HAS HAD ITS HANDS FULL WITH THE REFUGEE SITUATION IN THE CATARACTS AREA WHERE 55,000 ARE RELIABLY REPORTED (UNHCR DESK OFFICER DAVIDSON SAID THAT ITS PROGRAM OFFICER IN KINSHASA, A MISS ULLI GEIJER, HAD CONDUCTED PERSONAL SURVEY IN CATARACTS WHICH SHOWED AS OF THE END OF APRIL 42,000, WITH A DRASTIC INCREASE SINCE THAT TIME). IN ADDITION, UNHCR UNDERSTANDS THAT FOR PLANNING PURPOSES IN REQUESTING WFP ASSISTANCE, A FIGURE OF 25,000 REFUGEES IS BEING GIVEN FOR THE BAS FLEUVE REGION, OF WHICH 15,000 ARE IN SETTLEMENTS AND 10,000 OUTSIDE THE SETTLEMENTS (MISSIONARY SOURCES ARE SAID TO QUOTE A MUCH HIGHER FIGURE OUTSIDE THE SETTLEMENTS, UP TO 30,000).

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2. UNHCR KINSHASA REP GILES SICOTTE WHEN IN GENEVA TWO WEEKS AGO FOR MISSION CHIEFS CONFERENCE, STATED THAT HE WAS CONCERNED OVER LACK OF PRECISE INFORMATION FROM BANDUNDU AND PROPOSED TO OBTAIN FIRMER FIGURES UPON HIS RETURN TO KINSHASA, O/A MAY 15, BY WAY OF LIBREVILLE. UNHCR REPS HERE SAID THEY WILL PRESS THIS MATTER WITH SICOTTE AND ATTEMPT TO HAVE MISS GEIJER PROCEED THERE

FOR THIS PURPOSE. HOWEVER, AS OF NOW, AND THEY EMPHASIZED, ON THE BASIS OF UNCONFIRMED REPORTS, THEIR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THE REFUGEE POPULATION IN BANDUNDU AS OF A MONTH AGO WAS 7,000, AND THAT THIS FIGURE HAS SINCE DECLINED TO 5,000. IN FACT, DAVIDSON POINTED OUT, THE ONLY REQUEST THAT THEY HAVE RECEIVED FOR ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES FROM MISSIONARIES OPERATING IN THE AREA WAS ONE FROM A PRIEST IN POPA KABAKA IN EARLY APRIL FOR FIVE TONS OF FOOD, MOSTLY MILK FOR CHILDREN, WHICH WAS DELIVERED SHORTLY THEREAFTER BY AIDR TRUCK. SINCE THEN, NO REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE HAVE COME TO THEIR ATTENTION FROM BANDUNDU.

3. UNHCR IS CABLING ITS KINSHASA OFFICE TODAY FOR FURTHER UPDATE INFORMATION, AND TO REQUEST SICOTTE TO OBTAIN A PRECISE READING ON NEEDS IN BANDUNDU AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. THEY HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO KEEP MISSION INFORMED ON THIS SCORE. SORENSON

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